

FOREWORD

When one sees the thick volume of proceedings which ICALP 1982 gave rise to, one may find it strange that the present special issue is so flat. Certainly one should not conclude that only six good papers were presented in this ICALP meeting: the selection has been made by Erik M. Schmidt, invited as a guest-editor for this issue, on an entirely independent basis, using his own personal criteria. Maybe other people would have made other choices, and some people will dislike this specific choice. I would like the publication of a special issue of *Theoretical Computer Science* (TCS) including a selection of papers from each ICALP meeting, to become a systematic habit. It seems to me proper to ask the main organizer, who chairs the program committee, to be the guest-editor of this issue and give him an entirely free hand. The care with which the *European Association of Theoretical Computer Science* appoints the organizers of its annual conferences makes sure that the highest scientific standards will be met. I am then happy to think that the personal taste of the guest-editor is reflected in his or her selection. Also that he or she will be responsible for the writing in a definite form of the content of communications which are usually only drafts or working papers in the proceedings.

In our very fast growing area of research where a huge number of very high quality researchers are now at work, but the number of problems we are facing is growing even faster and likely exceeds the number of researchers, we have to make choices. A person who has spent one year or more organizing an ICALP meeting, who has listened to 40 to 50 talks given there, who has felt the reactions of the participants is likely to have perceived something. Once the formal correctness and originality of every communication in an ICALP meeting is ensured there remains the problem to guess which are the most 'promising', or 'deep' or 'interesting' ones. The opinion which the chairman will express by making his or her own choice of papers is very important to my eyes.

This attitude is certainly compatible with the complete independence of all the editors of TCS which we have preserved so far.

I heartily thank E.M. Schmidt for the work he has achieved and the resulting enrichment of TCS.

M. NIVAT
Editor-in-Chief